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ABSTRACT

Many social processes are needed before a child is ready to speak, but many educational and therapeutic approaches to preverbal children do not address the social skills that are prerequisite to effective communication. This curriculum manual contains activities for educating parents and professional to help children develop the social skills needed before speech. The activities were designed for infants with typical or delayed development, late-talking children, and children with various disabilities or delays. The curriculum is based on the five-stage Ecological Communication Organization (ECO) model of communication: (1) social play; (2) turntaking; (3) nonverbal communication; (4) language; and (5) social conversation. A major section of the curriculum is the Adult Communication Guides, describing a general principle of interaction, containing a self-assessment, and providing space for the adult to note progress in the particular strategy or principle of interaction. The "Tutors" section of the curriculum contains individual instruction guides describing major developmental goals for the adult and the child in the process of learning to talk. Examples of social goals to be used in Individualized Education Programs and Individualized Family Service Plans are provided. Common questions concerning social play and turntaking are addressed in a question-answer format. The section on Preverbal Conversation Routines provides examples of "how not" and "how to" interaction with the child to demonstrate ways that daily activities can prepare children to be social talkers. The section on Specific Clinical Activities for Preverbal Children provides instruction in clinical activities to help children continue interacting. (KB)

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